

ABSTRACT

An interactive image display system for displaying a printed article as it will appear when printed. It includes a user interface component, to accept information from a user for producing the printed article, and to provide a graphic image representing the printed article for display to the user; a graphic layout component, to process the information and produce a graphic description file, which is usable for a batch printing process; and an image producing component, to process the graphic description file and produce the graphic image. The user interface component maintains the information from the user, allowing the user to modify a part of the information in order to view changes in the displayed printed article. This maintained information is also used for producing and displaying a different printed article, and also for ultimately preparing and running the print job for the user. The graphic layout component processes both the images for display to the user and the graphic description file for the print job, thereby guaranteeing that the user views exactly what the printed item will look like. A background image resembling the material to be printed on provides a complete picture. The present invention is well suited for use at an interactive web site allowing users to access it over the Internet, and design and order printed materials such as business cards, wedding invitations, and bar mitzvah invitations.